

REMARKS

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 11, 12, and 21 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,389,332 (hereinafter, "Hess"); and objected to claims 3-10 and 13-20 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that those claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. See Final Office Action, pgs. 2-3.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 3-10 and 13-20.

By this Amendment, Applicants propose to amend claims 1, 5-8, 11, 15-18, and 21 and cancel claims 4 and 14. Upon entry of Applicants' Amendment After Final, claims 1-3, 5-13, and 15-21 will be pending in the above captioned patent application.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of claims 1, 2, 11, 12, and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). In order to expedite prosecution of this case, however, Applicants propose to amend independent claims 1, 11, and 21 to include the allowable subject matter present in claims 4 and 14 and cancel claims 4 and 14.

Further, Applicants propose to amend claims 5-8 and 15-18 to be dependent on either independent claim 1 or 11. Upon entry of Applicant's Amendment After Final, claims 2, 3, 5-10, 12, 13, 15-21, will be directly or indirectly dependent upon claims 1, 11, and 21, thus, all the pending claims will be in immediate condition for allowance.

Applicant respectfully requests that this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 be entered by the Examiner, placing claims 1-3, 5-13, and 15-21 in condition for allowance. Applicants submit that the proposed amendments of claims 1, 5-8, 11, 15-18, and 21 do

not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner, since all of the elements and their relationships claimed were either earlier claimed or inherent in the claims as examined. Therefore, this Amendment should allow for immediate action by the Examiner.

Applicants respectfully request the entry of this Amendment, and a timely issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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